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AUTHOR Hecht, Alfred
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ABSTRACT

To assist Illinois' Parkland College (PC) in its efforts to provide equal educational opportunities to minority group students, a study was conducted examining enrollment rates for minority group students from 1986-1990 as compared to the United States census district population and to statewide two-year college enrollments. In addition, the study profiled minority group students by gender, age, program area, educational intent, course load, attendance patterns, and residency, and assessed program persistence and completion rates. Study findings included the following: (1) the fall 1990 PC participation rate for all minority ethnic groups exceeded their proportions in the U.S. census district population; (2) from 1986 to 1990, total enrollment of minority students at PC had increased by 17.5%, as compared to 10.4% for White students; (3) PC minority enrollment rates exceeded those for all central Illinois community colleges; (4) students from all ethnic groups were most likely to attend PC immediately after high school, with the exception of Native American students who were most likely to attend between the ages of 21 and 24; (5) spring to fall retention was lowest for Black and Hispanic students; (6) the minority student profile revealed that the largest proportion of PC students from each ethnic group was female, enrolled in an occupational program area, and attending day classes as a part-time student; and (7) the ethnic distribution of associate degrees and certificates awarded by PC in 1990 and 1991 were similar to minority student enrollment rates at the college. Recommendations from the study include monitoring diversity trends annually; using diversity data for college planning; and expanding analysis to include college staff diversity trends. Data tables are included. (JMC)

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Student Ethnic Diversity at Parkland College

By
Alfred Hecht

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August 1991

PARKLAND COLLEGE
2400 WEST BRADLEY AVENUE CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61821-1899 217/351-2200

Student Ethnic Diversity at Parkland College

Executive Summary

To help Parkland provide equal educational opportunity to students from all ethnic and racial groups, this study reviews the ethnic participation, profile and performance of Parkland students and presents recommendations for developing a research agenda for implementing a diversity restructuring program.

Participation. Over the five year period from 1986-1990, Parkland enrollment of students from all minority ethnic groups increased at a greater rate than white student enrollment, was larger proportionally than the average for all central Illinois community colleges, and, in Fall 1990, exceeded the proportion of the minority population in District 505.

Profile. Although small differences exist on several characteristics, the greatest diversity among ethnic groups exists in age and enrollment status. American Indian students are most likely to enroll when they are 21-24 in contrast to the other ethnic groups who are most likely to enroll immediately after high school. Asian, Black and Hispanic students are less likely than students of other ethnic groups to continue their enrollment from Spring to Fall term.

Performance. The ethnic distribution of students' receiving associate degrees or certificates from Parkland in FY90 was similar to Fall 1990 participation rates and to the 1990 population census for District 505.

Introduction

The phrase "stir fry" aptly describes the ethnic diversity of community college students because,"there's a flavoring that takes place so none of the elements remains the same, but none submerges its identity."(6).

In the Fall of 1988, 54 percent of all American Indian college students were enrolled in two-year institutions, as were 40 percent of all Asian students, 42 percent of all black American students, 56 percent of all Hispanic students and 36 percent of all white students(8). However, officials at the state and national levels have expressed concern about the participation and achievement of underrepresented groups in public institutions of higher education. In Illinois, for example, the statewide study, Our Future at Risk (7), led the legislature to require the Illinois Board of Higher Education to present annual reports of the effectiveness of public institutions of higher education in meeting goals and improving the participation of underrepresented groups in higher education(5).

At the national level, the Educational Commission of the States recommended that college and university leaders collect and report participation and graduation rates by race and programs to assess how effectively colleges are meeting minority student needs(3). Similarly, Rendón(8) recommends that community college leaders develop an "Action Plan" and a "Research Agenda" when implementing a diversity restructuring program. Rendon argues that, "to design a cure, it is first necessary to understand the cause."

To assist Parkland leaders to develop goals, strategies and plans for providing equal educational opportunity to students from all ethnic and racial groups, this study reviews the participation, profile and performance of Parkland students by ethnicity and presents recommendations for development of a research agenda to implement a diversity restructuring program.

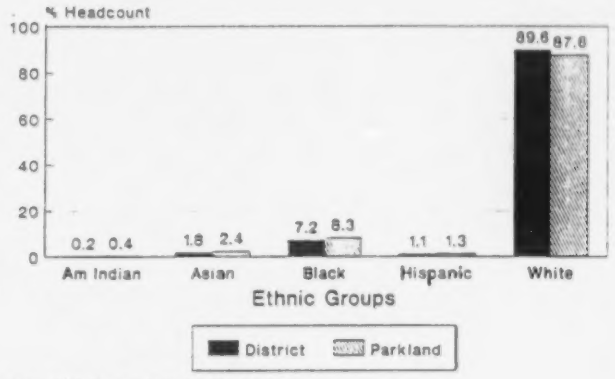
Participation

Participation of ethnic minorities was measured by comparing their Parkland proportions to those of the District 505 population, by comparing their Parkland proportions over the last five years, and by comparing their proportions to the average proportions for all central Illinois community colleges.

The ethnic distribution of the 1990 U.S. population census data for the Champaign, Urbana, Rantoul Metropolitan Statistical Area is contrasted with the Fall 1990 Parkland student population in Figure 1. Although this population data represents about 90% of the district population, it includes almost all of the ethnic minorities in District 505.

Figure 1

1990 District Population vs Parkland Students by Ethnicity



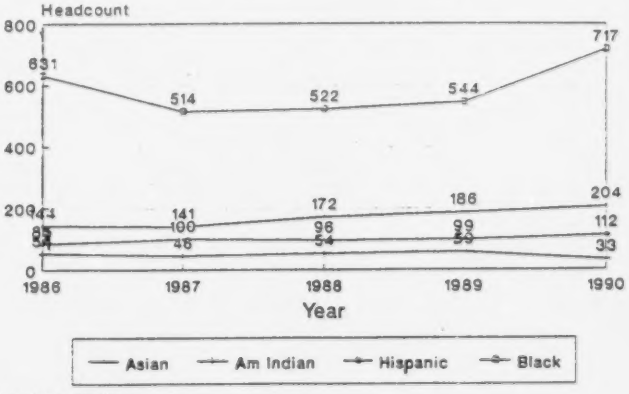
Sources: 1990 Census Data for Champaign Urbana, Rantoul MSA & Fall 1990 E1 File

Although age breakdowns by ethnic groups, that would permit a more accurate comparison, are not yet available, according to this data, the Fall 1990 Parkland participation rate for all minority ethnic groups exceeded their proportions in the District 505 population.

Minority enrollment trends at Parkland for the five years from 1986 through 1990 are shown in Figure 2. Over this period, the headcount enrollment participation of all minority groups has increased. From 1986 to 1990, the participation of all minorities increased from 914 to 1074 or 17.5%. In contrast, the participation of white students increased from 6670 to 7362 or 10.4%.

Figure 2

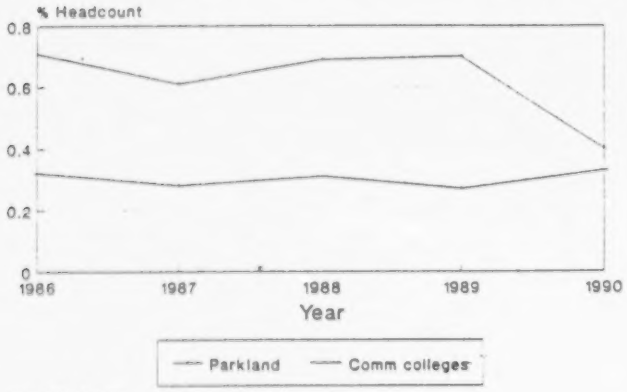
Minority Enrollment Trends at Parkland College



Fall 10th Day E1 files

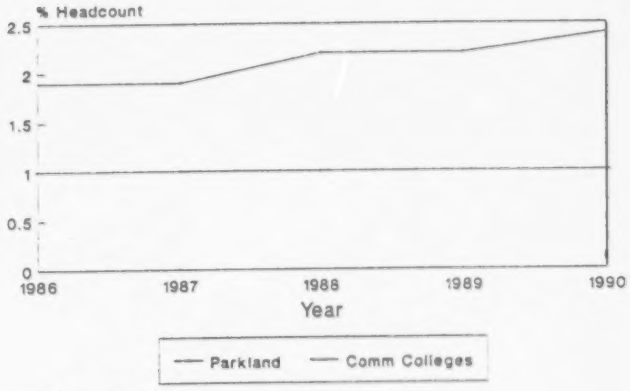
Minority enrollment trends at Parkland for the five years from 1986 to 1990 are compared with the corresponding trends at all central Illinois community colleges* in Figures 3-6. Presented as percentages of total enrollment, to permit comparisons of student populations of different sizes, these figures show that for all ethnic minorities, Parkland participation rates exceed those for all central Illinois community colleges.

Figure 3
Am Indian Enrollment Trends
Parkland and Central IL Com Coll



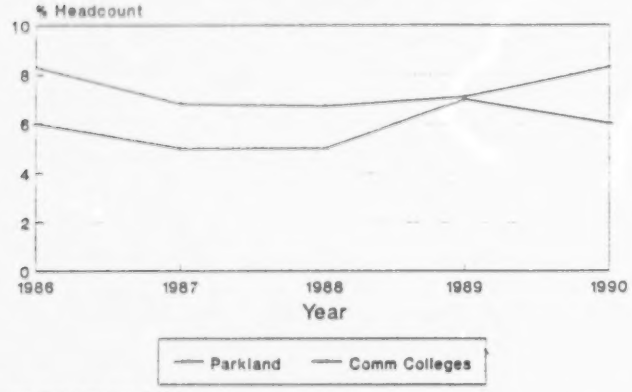
Source: Fall 01 data

Figure 4
Asian Enrollment Trends
Parkland and Central IL Comm Colleges



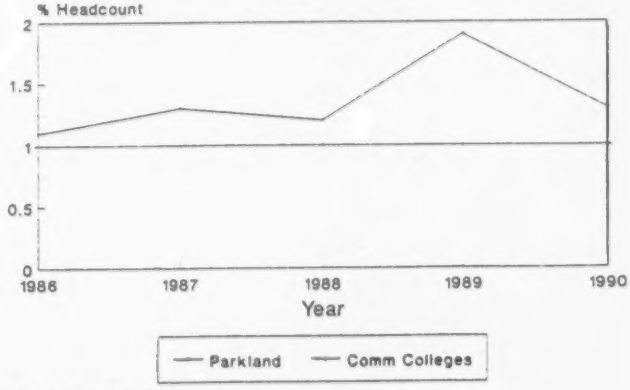
Source: Fall 10th Day Data

Figure 5
Black Enrollment Trends
Parkland and Central IL Com Colleges



Source: Fall 10th Day 01 data

Figure 6
Hispanic Enrollment Trends
Parkland and Central IL Comm Colleges



Source: Fall 10th Day Data

* Central Illinois community colleges include: Danville, Illinois Central, Illinois Valley, Kankakee, Lake Land, Lincoln Land, Parkland, Richland, Sandburg, Spoon River, and John Wood

Profile

Although the headcount of all ethnic groups has increased with total enrollment increases from 1986 to 1990, the proportion of headcount enrollment by ethnic group has remained fairly constant over this period, with white students comprising from 87 to 89% of the total headcount. Consequently, a profile of student characteristics by ethnic group was compiled on the basis of opening Fall 1990 enrollment at Parkland.

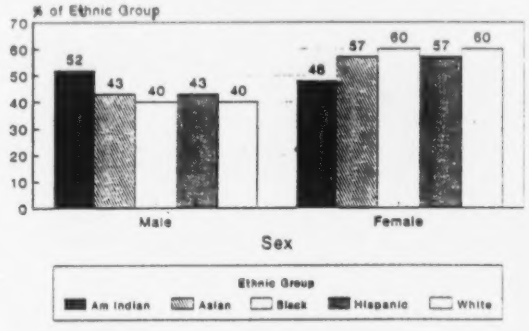
The ethnic distribution of Fall 1990 headcount enrollment was:

Ethnic Group	Number	Percent
Am. Indian	33	.4
Asian	204	2.4
Black	717	8.5
Hispanic	112	1.3
White	7370	87.4
	8436	100.0

To permit comparisons across these ethnic groups of different sizes, the data in Figures 7-14 are presented in terms of the proportion of each ethnic group in each profile characteristic. The profile of student characteristics includes: sex, age, program area, educational intent, class load, attendance pattern, residency and enrollment status.

Sex. Figure 7 shows that for each ethnic group, except American Indians, a similarly larger proportion of women than men attend Parkland. For many years, women have constituted the majority of headcount enrollment at Parkland, and in Illinois and United States community colleges.

Figure 7
Fall 1990 Enrollment
by Sex and Ethnicity



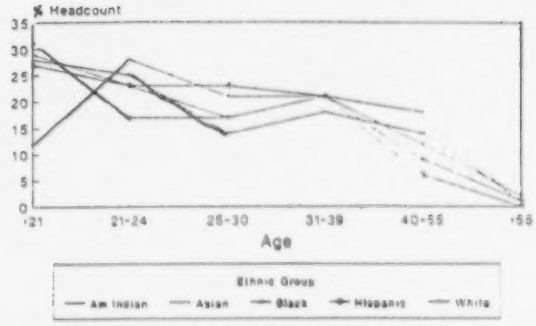
Source: Fall 1990 EI Data File

Age. Across all ethnic groups, Figure 8 indicates that enrollment rate decreases as age increases. Enrollment rates across ethnic groups are more similar for students over 21 years old than for those less than 21 years old.

The highest rate of enrollment for all ethnic groups, except American Indians occurs among those under 21 years old indicating that students from these groups, especially males, are most likely to attend college immediately after high school. Almost 1/3 of the White students are under 21 while slightly more than 1/4 of the Asian, Black and Hispanic students are under 21.

In contrast, the highest rate of enrollment for American Indian students occurs between the ages of 21 and 24, suggesting that students from this group are more likely to delay college enrollment until they become adults. More than 1/4 of the American Indian students are between 21 and 24.

Figure 8
Fall 1990 Enrollment
by Age and Ethnicity



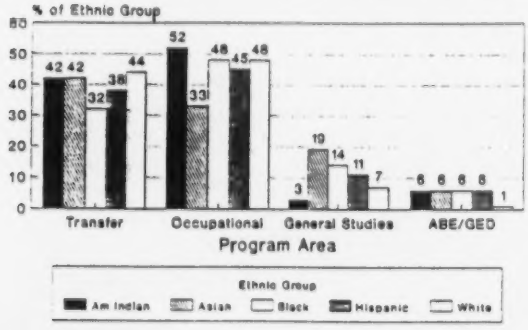
Source: EI data

The second highest rate of enrollment for Asian and Black students occurs between the ages of 21 and 24, between 21 and 30 for Hispanics, between 25 and 39 for American Indians, and between 31 and 39 for White students. Reflecting the return to school of women students, for all ethnic groups, as age increases the proportion of women increases.

Program Area. According to Figure 9, except for Asian students, the enrollment patterns by program areas are similar for all ethnic groups in that the largest proportion of students are enrolled in occupational programs, the second largest proportion in transfer programs, with smaller proportions in general studies and Adult Basic Education/General Education Development. The largest proportion of Asian students are enrolled in transfer programs followed by occupational programs, then general studies and ABE/GED.

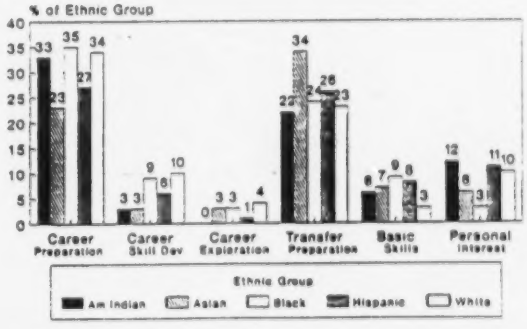
Educational Intent. Figure 10 shows the largest proportion of all ethnic groups, except Asians, indicated career preparation as their educational intent and the smallest proportion of all groups designated career exploration as their educational intent. Asian students were most likely to report transfer preparation as their

Figure 9
Fall 1990 Enrollment
by Program Area and Ethnicity



Source: Fall 1990 EI File

Figure 10
Fall 1990 Enrollment
Student Intent by Ethnicity



Source: Fall 1990 EI Data File

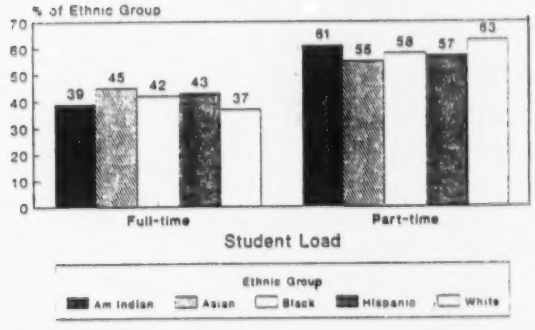
educational intent with career preparation the second most popular choice. Transfer preparation was the second most popular educational intent of American Indian, Black, Hispanic, and White students, while career skill development was the second most popular educational intent of Asian students.

Cross tabulation of educational intent by program area indicated a direct relationship between these characteristics across all ethnic groups. This relationship is strengthened by the increasing opportunities for students enrolled in career programs to transfer to senior institutions and for students to take transfer courses in preparation for immediate employment.

Student Load. For all ethnic groups, Figure 11 indicates that the majority of students attend Parkland on a part-time basis, with almost two-thirds of American Indian and White students attending part-time.

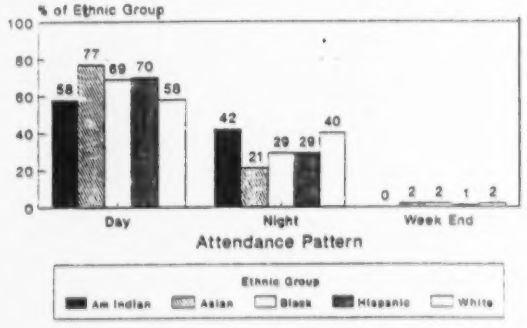
Attendance Pattern. A large majority of students in all ethnic groups primarily attend day classes, with the smallest proportions primarily attending on weekends (Figure 12). More than 3/4 of Asian student attendance occurs mostly during the day, the highest proportion of any ethnic group. White students have the highest proportion of primarily night attendance (40%).

Figure 11
Fall 1990 Enrollment
by Student Load and Ethnicity



Source: Fall 1990 EI File

Figure 12
Fall 1990 Enrollment
Attendance Pattern by Ethnicity

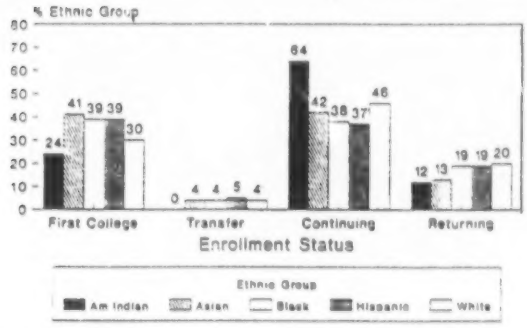


Source: Fall 1990 EI Data File

Enrollment Status. Figure 13 shows that the largest proportion of American Indian and White students are continuing their enrollment from the previous Spring term with the next largest proportion of students in these groups attending college for the first time. In contrast, the largest proportion of Asian, Black, and Hispanic students are almost evenly split between those attending college for the first time and those continuing from the previous Spring term. These data suggest that the retention rate for Asian, Black and Hispanic students is lower than that for the other groups.

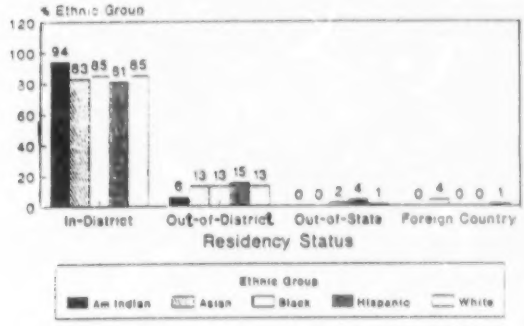
About 1/5 of Black, Hispanic and White students are returning to college after a break in their enrollment. American Indian and Asian students are least likely to return to Parkland after leaving.

Figure 13
Fall 1990 Enrollment
Enrollment Status by Ethnicity



Source: Fall 1990 EI Data File

Figure 14
Fall 1990 Enrollment
by Residency and Ethnicity



Source: Fall 1990 EI Data File

Residency. As presented in Figure 14, across all ethnic groups, more than 80% of the students attending Parkland are district residents with most of the balance residing in other parts of Illinois.

Profile summary. Among Parkland students, the greatest ethnic diversity exists in age and enrollment status. Students from all ethnic groups, except American Indians are most likely to attend immediately after high school, while American Indian students are most likely to enroll when they are 21-24 years old. The second highest proportion of Asian and Black students are 21-24, Hispanics 21-30, American Indians 25-39, and Whites 31-39. Reflecting the return to school of women, for all ethnic groups, as age increases, the proportion of women increases.

Enrollment status data indicates that the Spring to Fall retention rate for Black and Hispanic students is lower than that for other ethnic groups. Additionally, American Indian and Asian students are least likely to return to Parkland after leaving.

Although some diversity exists across ethnic groups on the other six characteristics reviewed, the largest proportion of Parkland students in each ethnic group is:

-- female
-- enrolled in an occupational program area(except Asians)
-- pursuing initial or new career preparation(except Asians)
-- attending part-time
-- attending day classes
-- living as a resident of District 505.

Performance

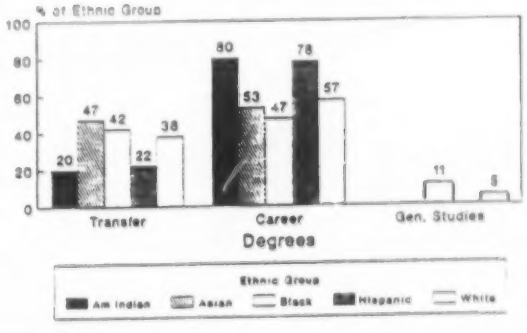
Graduation is a measure of significant student performance at Parkland. As shown in the following table, the ethnic distribution of associate degrees and certificates awarded by Parkland in FY90 and FY91 were similar to each other, to the participation rates at Parkland and to District 505 ethnic proportions (Figure 1).

Ethnic Group	FY90 #	FY90 %	FY91 #	FY91 %
White	736	91	802	91.8
Black	38	5	35	4.0
Asian	15	2	16	2.0
Hispanic	9	1	9	1.0
Am.Indian	5	.6	2	.2
International	3	.4	9	1.0
	806	100	872	100

Sources: FY90 A1 Data File and FY91 Admissions and Records Report

Although the number of minority student graduates is small, to enable a comparison of types of associate degrees and certificates awarded by ethnic groups in FY90, the awards for each ethnic group are presented in Figure 15 as a percentage of all awards to that ethnic group. These data indicate that for all ethnic groups more students are awarded career degrees and certificates and few, if any, students complete General Studies Degrees or Certificates.

Figure 15
FY90 Degrees Awarded
by Ethnicity



Source: FY90 A1 File

Recommendations

The participation data in this study indicate that Parkland has been successful in attracting students from all ethnic groups in increasing numbers. However, the profile data suggests that retention of several ethnic minorities represents a challenge to be addressed. The following recommendations are offered to encourage the development of a formal, written plan for implementing diversity restructuring at Parkland and to position the college to document the results of such restructuring.

1. Verify questionable data. Accurate data is essential for valid planning and decision making. A review of the enrollment trends by ethnic groups for this report, for example, revealed a marked increase in American Indian enrollment from Fall 1989 to Fall 1990, several times the proportion of the American Indian population in the District 505 population. Investigation of the original applications of the students reported in Fall 1990 as American Indian indicated an ethnic coding error in the transfer of records to a new student record system. (NOTE: Because the ethnic codes were corrected for this report, the FY90 data no longer agrees with the data reported to and by the Illinois Community College Board. The Office of Institutional Research should work with the Office of Admissions and Records to establish procedures to regularly monitor student data profiles and to verify questionable data.

2. Monitor diversity trends annually. Effective planning and decision making regarding student diversity will require annual monitoring of trend data. The Office of Institutional Research should establish routine procedures for annually collecting, analyzing, and reporting five-year trends in student ethnic diversity as part of the annual student profile report.

3. Incrementally expand academic performance analysis. A paucity of data on student academic performance by ethnic groups limits the utility of this report as a benchmark of assessment of the effectiveness of Parkland College in serving minority student needs. As institutional priorities and resources permit, the Office of Institutional Research should work with Administrative Data Processing to prepare a series of reports on student performance.

a. Using the existing A1 data files, this analysis should start with a cross tabulation of cumulative grade-point-averages by curriculum types (P.C.S. codes) within ethnic groups. The evaluation should then move to analysis of grade distributions by course prefixes and then large enrollment courses. As the focus of analysis of student achievement reaches the course level, because of the small numbers of several minority groups, it may be necessary to contrast white students with a composite of all minority groups.

b. Examine graduation rates of cohort groups by ethnicity. Longitudinal data can provide a more valid basis for college planning than simple status data.

c. Analyze student outcome data by ethnicity. As Parkland increases its efforts to formally assess student outcomes, analysis by ethnic groups should be a standard component.

4. Incrementally expand student profile analysis. As institutional priorities and resources permit, the Office of Institutional Research should work with appropriate college offices to expand the variables included in the annual student profile analysis.

a. Add an analysis of student retention rates starting with an analysis of withdrawal rate trends by course prefix and large enrollment courses within ethnic groups. The existing term by term grade distribution report could be expanded to provide data for this analysis. Subsequently, this analysis should be expanded to include term by term cohort withdrawal rates by ethnic group in a longitudinal study. The findings of this study regarding student enrollment status suggest that this analysis should be given a high priority.

b. As part of the college student profile report, include the annual analysis of financial aid participation by ethnic groups reported to the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Analysis of financial aid application information can yield data on extent of employment, head of household responsibilities and other data related to student success.

c. In 1971, Crossland reported the results of a Ford Foundation study that analyzed barriers to minority student access to higher education(1, pp 51-73). These barriers: assessment tests, poor preparation, money, distance, and motivation suggest additional variables to be investigated at Parkland. Additionally, analysis, by ethnic groups, of student self-esteem and participation in extra-curricular activities including clubs, sports, and student government would provide a more complete profile of student participation at Parkland.

5. Use student diversity data in college planning and evaluation. Unless the information gathered in this and subsequent reports of student ethnic diversity are incorporated in college planning and evaluation, the resources invested in gathering, analyzing and reporting this data will not have been well spent. Available resources, including Donovan (2), and Taylor (10),suggest ways of using such data in planning and evaluation. Taylor's 1991 book, Effective Ways to Recruit and Retain Minority Students(9), includes a self-evaluation instrument that allows campus leaders to assess 17 critical program components ranging from pre-collegiate and financial aids to affirmative action activities.

6. Expand analysis to include staff ethnic diversity trends. Data on the employment, advancement and other characteristics of staff by ethnic groups are required in college reports to the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Such data should be incorporated into college planning. In her 1989 handbook, Green (2), includes guidelines and forms for conducting an institutional audit of faculty and staff.

7. Expand analysis to include other underrepresented student groups. The same kinds of participation, profile and performance data presented and recommended by ethnic group should be conducted for handicapped students and women. Incorporating the results of such analyses in college planning can help Parkland promote student academic progress and success in life.

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(4) Green, Madeline F.(Ed) Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity, Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1989.

(5) Illinois Board of Higher Education, Institutional Planning Guidelines for Increasing the Participation and Achievement of Underrepresented Groups in Public Institutions of Higher Education, Springfield, IL: Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1989, p.1.

(6) "'In' Box", Chronicle of Higher Education, June 19.1991,p,A11.

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